

Maryland Envirothon: Class Aves

WILDLIFE AND HERITAGE
SERVICE



Aves Overview

- >450 species in Maryland
- Extirpated species include:
 - Bewick's Wren
 - Greater Prairie Chicken
 - Red-cockaded Woodpecker
- “Allies” = similar species



American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*) chick

Note: This guide is an overview of select species found in Maryland. The taxonomy and descriptions are based off Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America, 7th Ed.

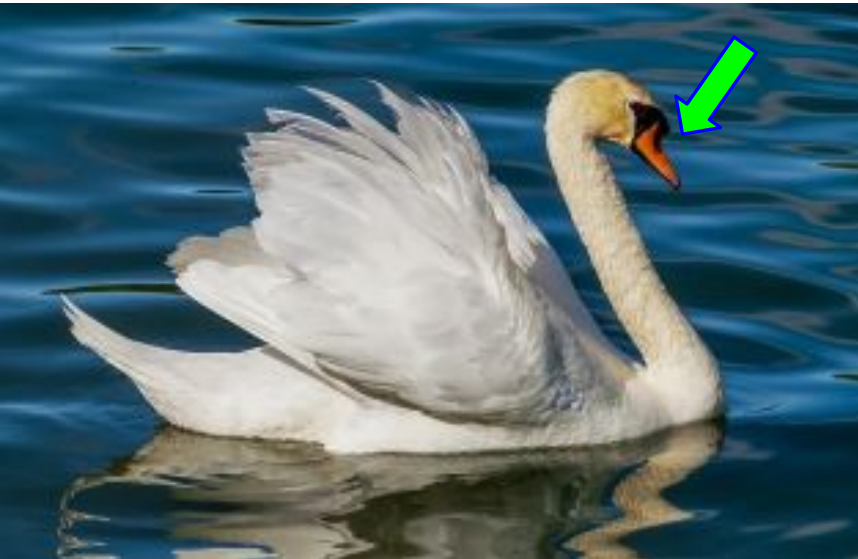
Order: Anseriformes

- Web-footed waterfowl
- Family Anatidae
 - Ducks, geese, & swans



Male and Female Wood Ducks (*Aix sponsa*)

Cygnus - Swans



Mute Swan

(*Cygnus olor*)

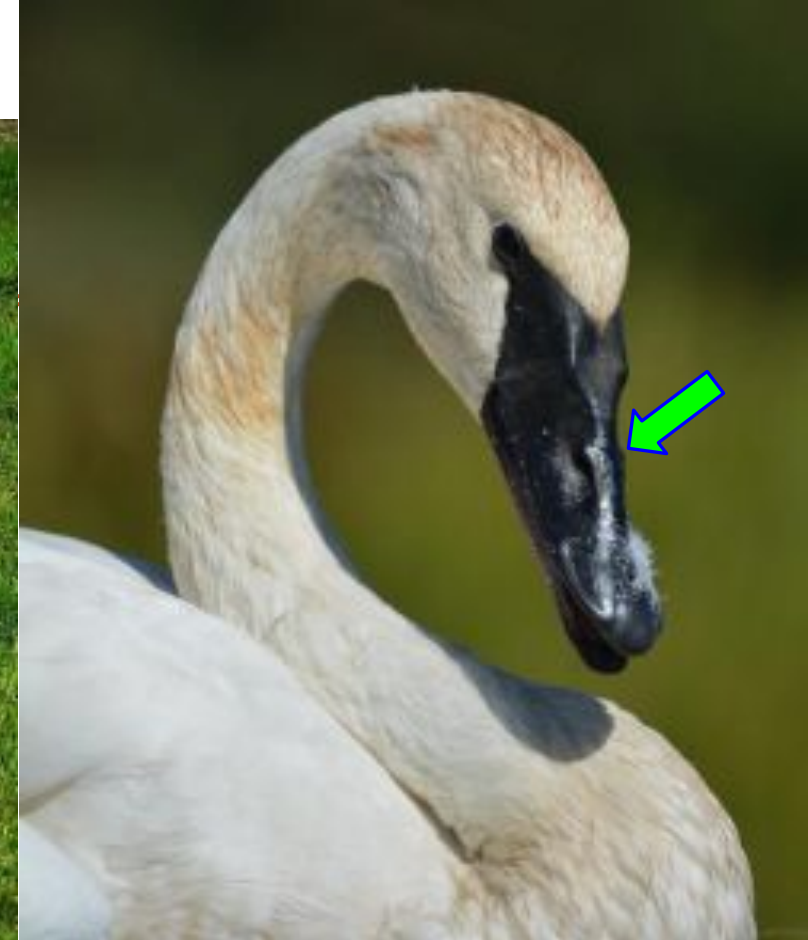
Invasive. Adult black-knobbed orange bill tilts down; immature is dingy with pinkish bill; makes hissing and wheezing sounds, weak bugling



Tundra Swan

(*Cygnus columbianus*)

Winter resident. Adult bill black, usually with small yellow basal spot; immature is dingy in color with pinkish bill; makes mellow, high-pitched cooing



Trumpeter Swan

(*Cygnus buccinator*)

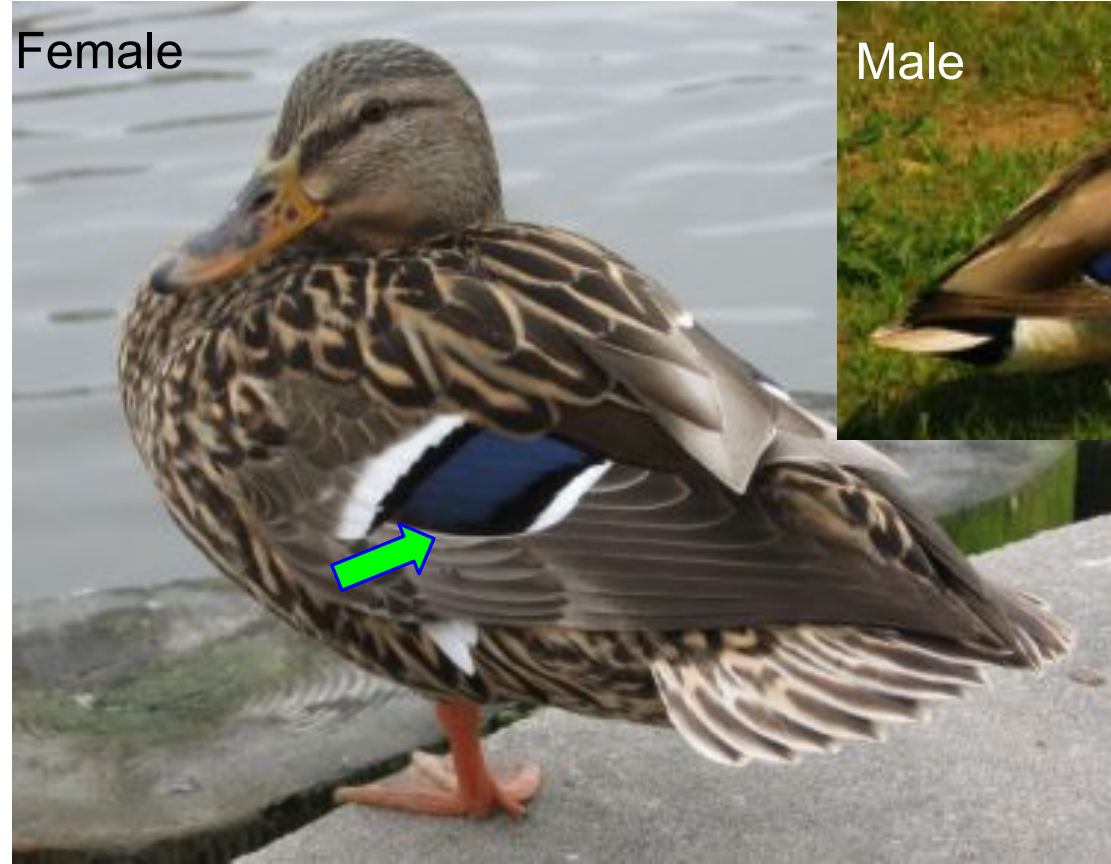
Winter resident. Adult all black bill with straight ridge; deep, nasal calls described as bugle-like

Dabbling Ducks- feed by dabbling & upending



American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*)

Year-round resident. Dusky black duck with white wing linings evident in flight; resembles a female mallard but has black borders on secondary wing feathers; can hybridize with mallards



Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)

Year-round resident. Adult males have green head w/ white neck ring & females are mottled in color; resembles an American Black Duck mallard but has white borders on secondary wing feathers

Diving Ducks- feed by diving; legs close to tail



Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*)

Winter resident. Male is whitish with black chest & reddish brown head with sloping bill; male voice cooing noise & female a raspy *krrrr*



Redhead (*Aythya americana*)

Winter resident. Male is gray with black chest & reddish head; has grayish bill with black tip; male voice a harsh *meow* & female a soft *krrr*



Mergansers- slender-bodied diving ducks w/spikelike bill



Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*)

Winter resident. Male has whitish body w/ green/black head & white chest; female & immature have reddish head, white chin & white chest

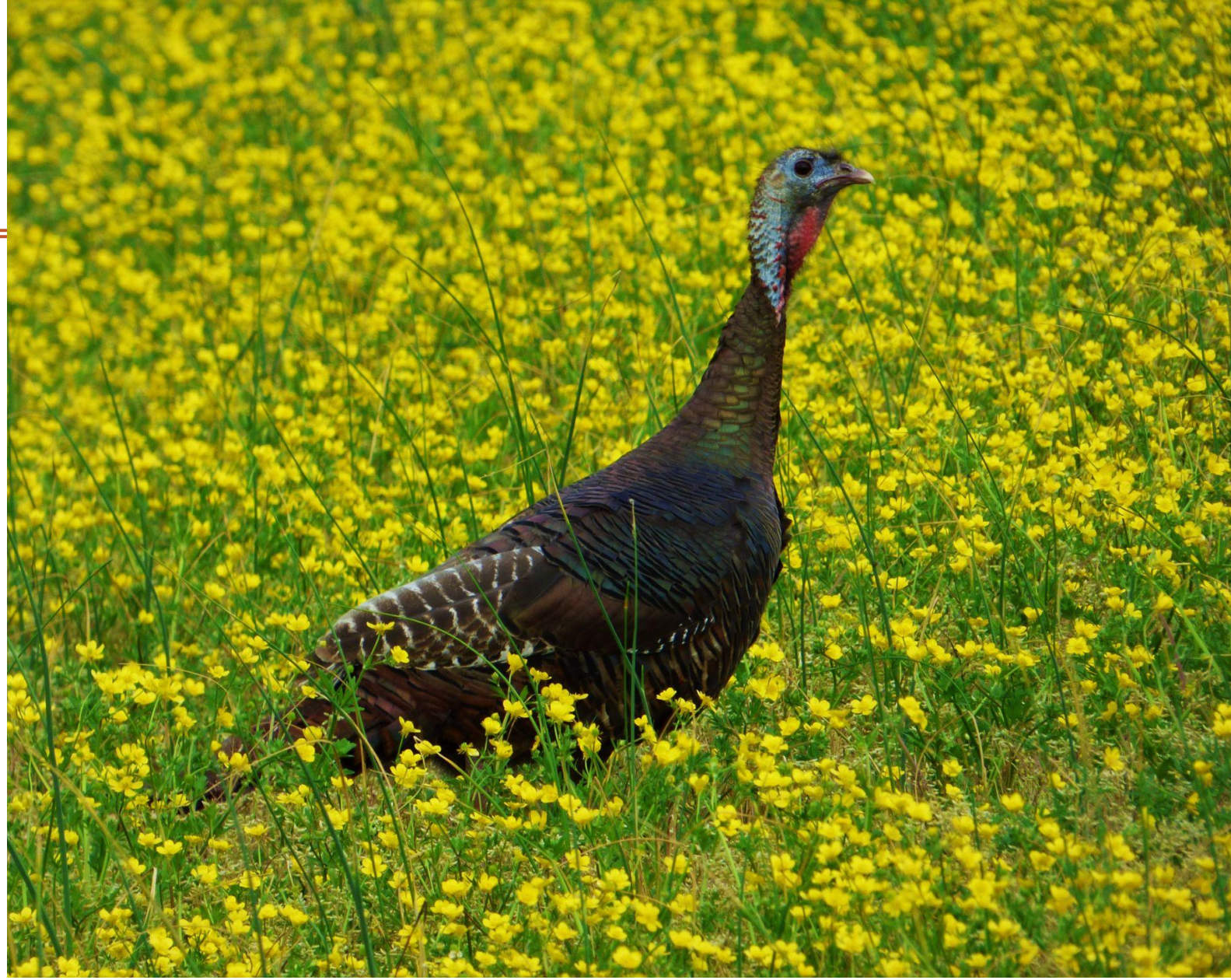


Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

Winter resident. Male has greenish head w/crest, white band on neck & mottled chest; female & immature are gray w/ crest and have rusty head that blends into chest

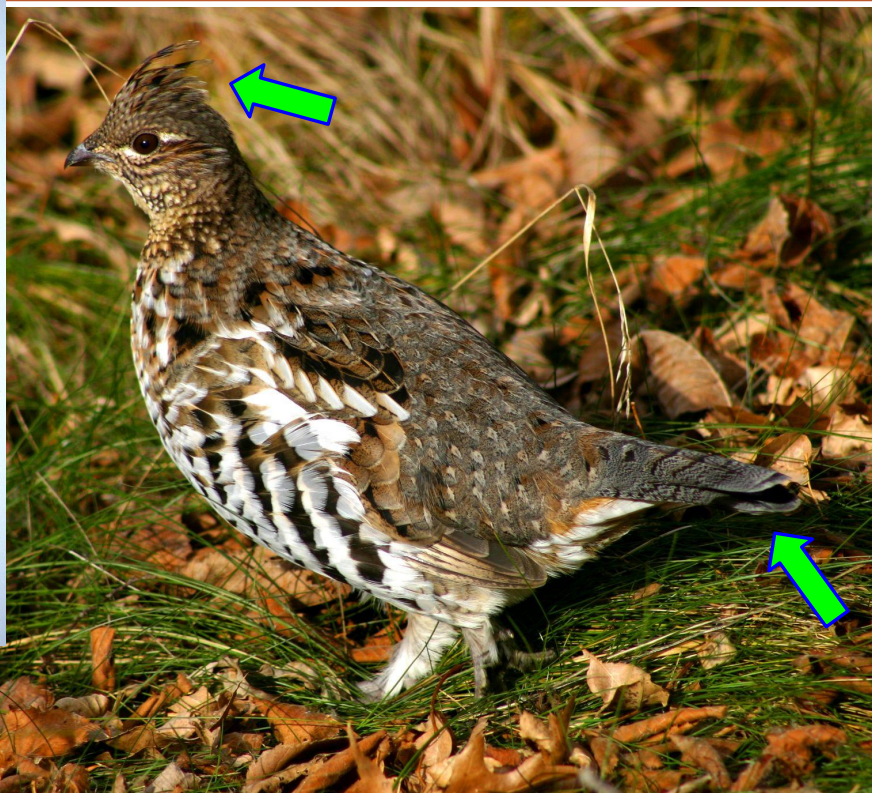
Order: Galliformes

- “Chicken-like” birds
- Includes many upland game birds
- Family Odontophoridae
 - Northern Bobwhite
- Family Phasianidae
 - Grouse, turkeys, & the like



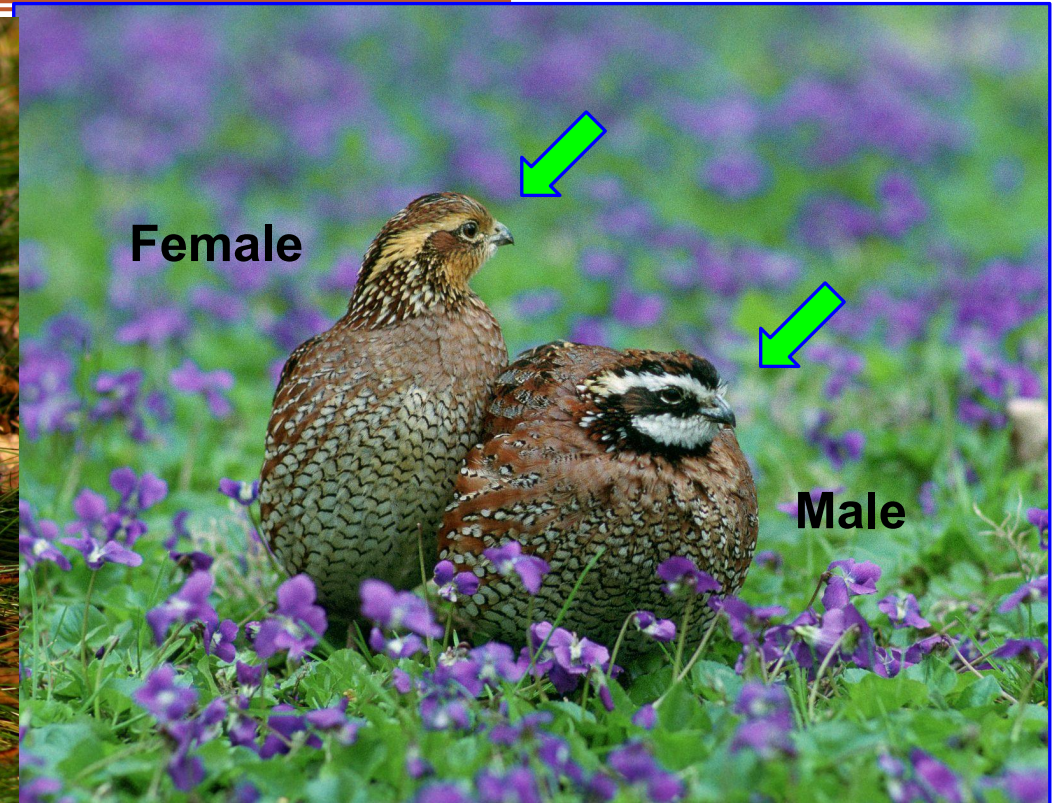
Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)

Gallinaceous Birds



Ruffed Grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)

Year-round resident in western MD. Rusty or gray in color with broad, black band near tip of tail; male display includes drumming that sounds like distant motor; omnivore



Northern Bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)

Year-round resident. Small and round; males have white eyebrow stripe and chin while females have buff marks; whistles *bob-white*; omnivore

Order: Pelecaniformes

- Large, long-legged wading birds with large bills
- Family Ardeidae
 - Bitterns, herons & allies
- Storks in their own order



Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) are **adventive** (naturally expanded their range). They are medium-sized wading birds with buff orange crowns & beards during breeding season.

Herons- long-legged & long-necked wading birds

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)

Year-round resident. Large, blue-gray bird w/yellow, dagger-like bill; very common

Voice: deep, harsh croaks

Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*)

Summer resident on eastern shore. Small, slender heron with maroon-brown neck and bluish-gray back; grayish bill

Voice: loud, nasal *scaaah*

Great Blue Heron



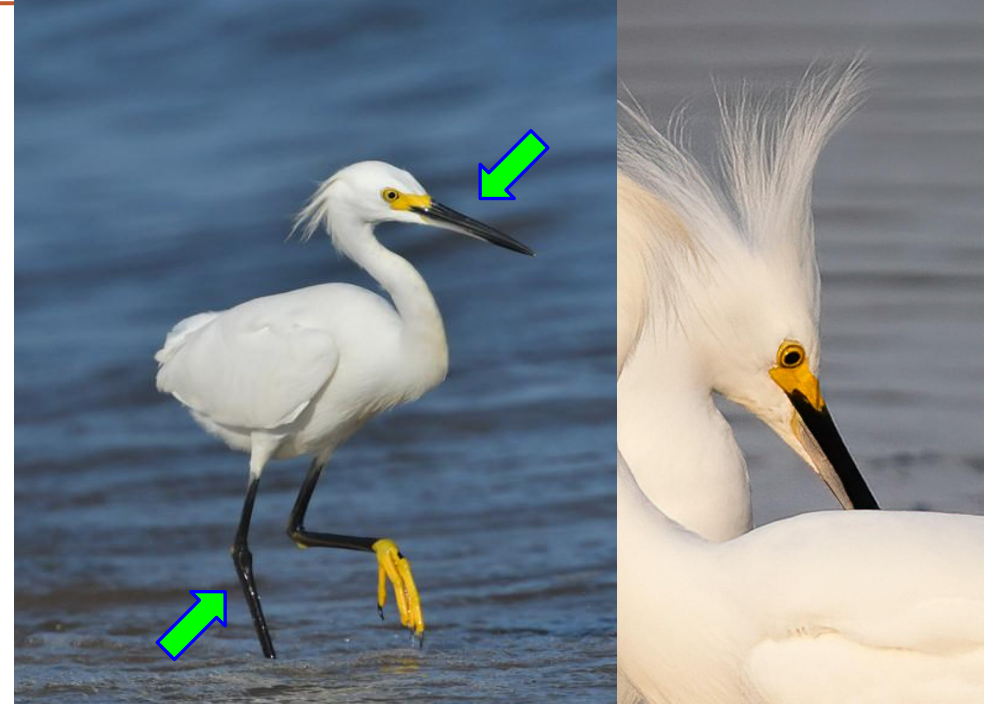
Little Blue Heron

Egrets- typically whitish herons



Great Egret
(*Ardea alba*)

Summer resident w/ lower shore having year-round residents. Large, white heron w/ yellow bill & black legs and feet; found in marshes, ponds & shores



Snowy Egret
(*Egretta thula*)

Summer resident w/ lower shore having year-round residents. Medium-sized w/ black bill & legs and yellow feet; lores yellow; found in marshes, swamps, & tidal flats

Order: Charadriiformes

- Large group! Select families include:
 - Family Charadriidae
 - Plovers
 - Family Scolopacidae
 - Sandpipers, phalaropes, & allies
 - Family Laridae
 - Gulls, terns, & skimmers



The Black Skimmer (*Rhynchops niger*) is a state-endangered breeding bird that has an uneven bill that allows it to skim water for fish and other food.

American Woodcock (*Scolopax minor*)

- **Year-round**/summer resident
- Woodland shorebird
- Long bill w/ large eyes
- Leaflike coloration
- Voice: nasally *beezp*



Order: Charadriiformes; **Family: Scolopacidae**

From left: Rob Holtz, Josh Emm, some rights reserved ([CC BY-NC](#))

Order: Accipitriformes

- Day-flying (diurnal) raptors with hooked bill and pointed claws
- Family Accipitridae
 - Hawks, kites, eagles & allies
- Family Pandionidae
 - Ospreys
- Family Cathartidae
 - New World Vultures



Osprey

Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

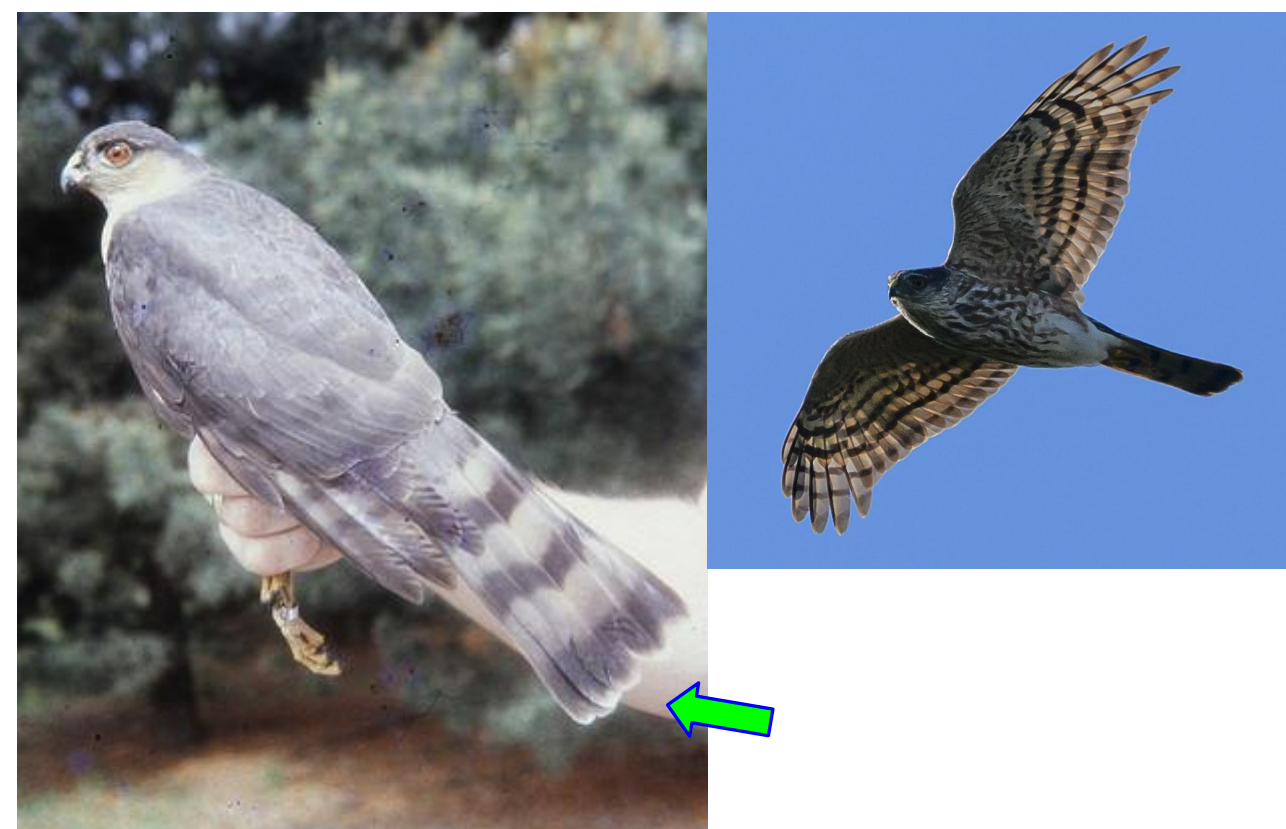


Juvenile Bald
Eagle

- National bird of US
- Adult: white head & tail w/ yellow bill
- 1st yr: mostly dark w/whitish wing linings
- 2nd & 3rd yr: mottled w/white on belly and back
- Voice: harsh, high-pitched cackle



Accipiters- hawks w/ short, rounded wings



Sharp-shinned Hawk
(*Accipiter striatus*)

Year-round resident. Slim hawk w/ square tipped tail;
adult w/ dark back & rusty-barred breast while immature
has dark brown above
Voice: a high *kik, kik, kik*



Cooper's Hawk
(*Accipiter cooperii*)

Year-round resident. Like Sharp-shinned Hawk
but larger; has rounded tail
Voice: rapid *kek, kek, kek*

Buteos- stocky hawks w/ broad wings



Red-tailed Hawk
(*Buteo jamaicensis*)

Year-round resident. Common along roadsides. Notable red tail from top-side; light breast w/ dark belly-band

Voice: *keeer-r-r*

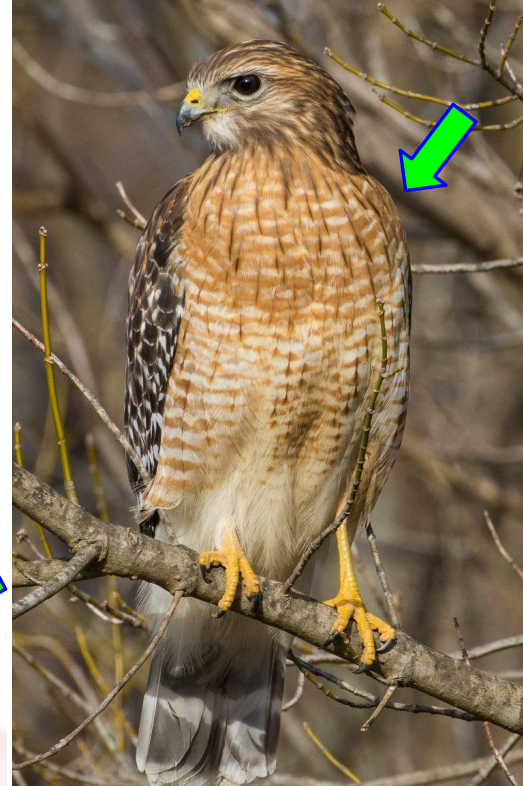
Call commonly used for eagles in movies & tv



Red-shouldered Hawk
(*Buteo lineatus*)

Year-round resident. Adult has black and white bands on wings and tail w/ reddish shoulders, chest, & underparts

Voice: *key-yer*

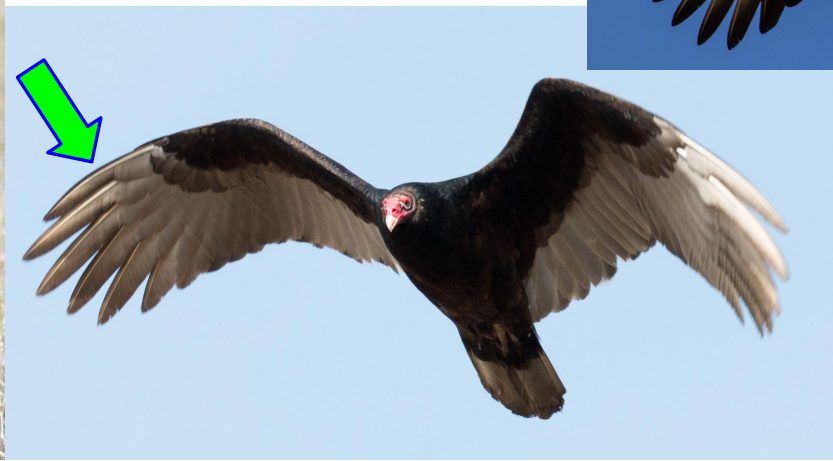


New World Vultures



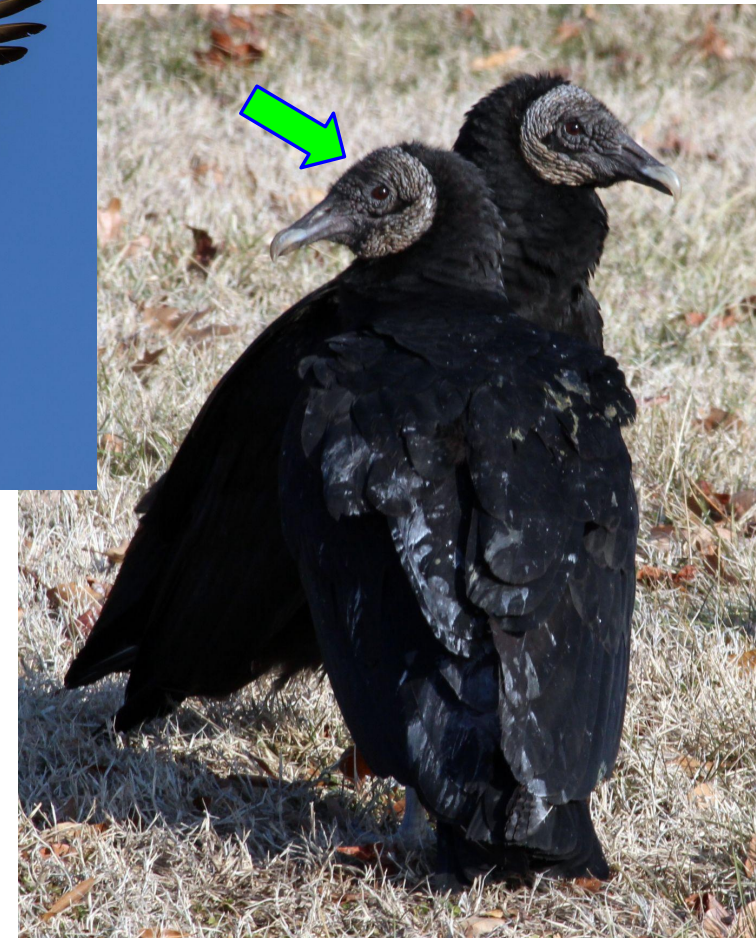
Turkey Vulture
(*Cathartes aura*)

Year-round resident. Nearly 6 ft wingspan;
adult has naked red head and two toned
wings; primarily a scavenger



Black Vulture
(*Coragyps atratus*)

Year-round resident. Less than 5 ft wingspan w/
whitish patch toward wingtips; grayish/lightly
feathered head



Order: Strigiformes

- Mostly nocturnal birds of prey
- Large heads w/flat faces & hooked bills
- Family Tytonidae
 - Barn Owl
- Family Strigidae
 - “Typical” owls

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)



Medium-Large Owls



Great Horned Owl
(*Bubo virginianus*)

Year-round resident. Common.
Large owl w/ear tufts; white
throat bib

Voice: *hoo hu-hu-hu, hoo! hoo!*



Barred Owl
(*Strix varia*)

Year-round resident. Common.
Large owl w/o ear tufts; barred
chest

Voice: *who cooks for you*

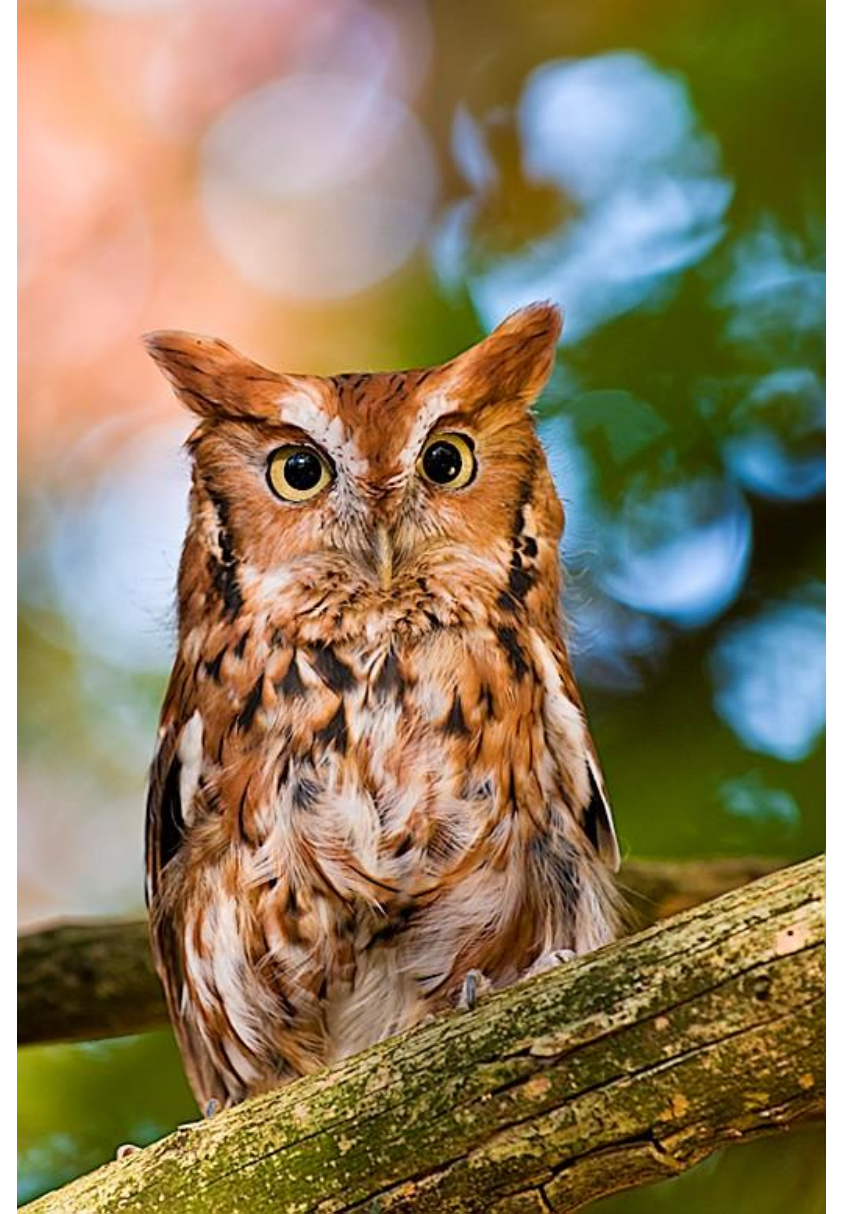


Snowy Owl
(*Bubo scandiacus*)

Irruptive (occasional winter visitor).
Large, white owl with black flecks;
yellow eyes

Eastern Screech Owl (*Megascops asio*)

- **Year-round resident**; small owl
- Common/ generalist w/ varied diet
- red or grey morph (color variations)
- Voice: mournful whinny or wail



Order: Caprimulgiformes

- Family Caprimulgidae
 - Nightjars
 - Nocturnal birds w/ large tails
 - Rest on limbs or ground
 - Camouflaged by pattern



Common Nighthawks (*Chordeiles minor*) are best identified in flight by their white wing bars or by call which is a nasally *peer* or *pee-ik*.

Order: Cuculiformes

- Cuckoos, roadrunners, & anis
- Family Cuculidae
 - Slender, long-tailed birds w/ curved bills



Black-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus erythrophthalmus*) has a black lower mandible & red orbital ring. This one is eating eastern tent caterpillars.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) has a yellow lower mandible.

Order: Piciformes

- Birds w/ chisel-like bills
- Have long tongues
- Zygodactyl feet
 - two toes in front & rear
- Family Picidae
 - woodpeckers & allies

The Red-headed Woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) is a year-round resident in Maryland.



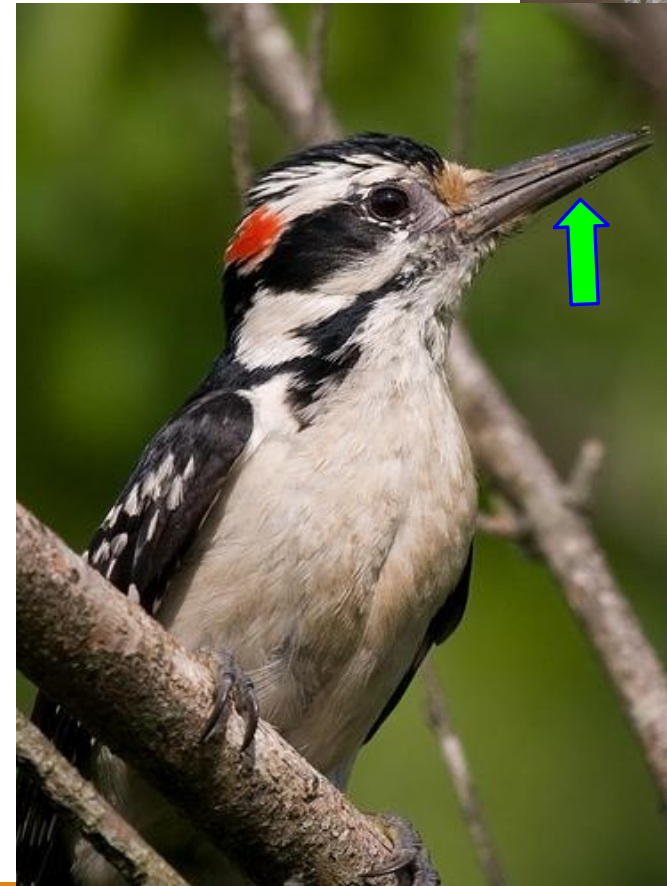
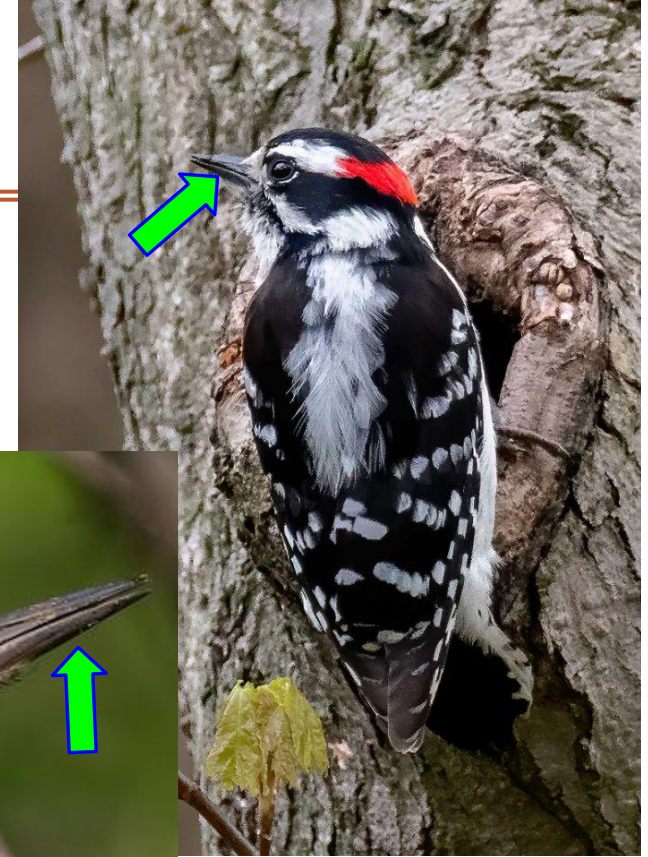
Downy vs Hairy Woodpecker

Downy Woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*)

Year-round resident. Common. White back w/ small bill; outer tail feathers spotted; males have red patch on heads
Voice: flat *pick!*

Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*)

Year-round resident. Common. White back w/ large bill and white outer feathers; male has red patch on head
Voice: sharp *peek!*



Other Woodpeckers



Male

Red-bellied Woodpecker
(*Melanerpes carolinus*)

Year-round resident. Adult stripe-backed w/red crown & neck on male and red neck on female



Male

Northern Flicker
(*Colaptes auratus*)

Year-round resident. Barred brown back w/ gray cap & black ring on chest; males have black "mustache"



Male

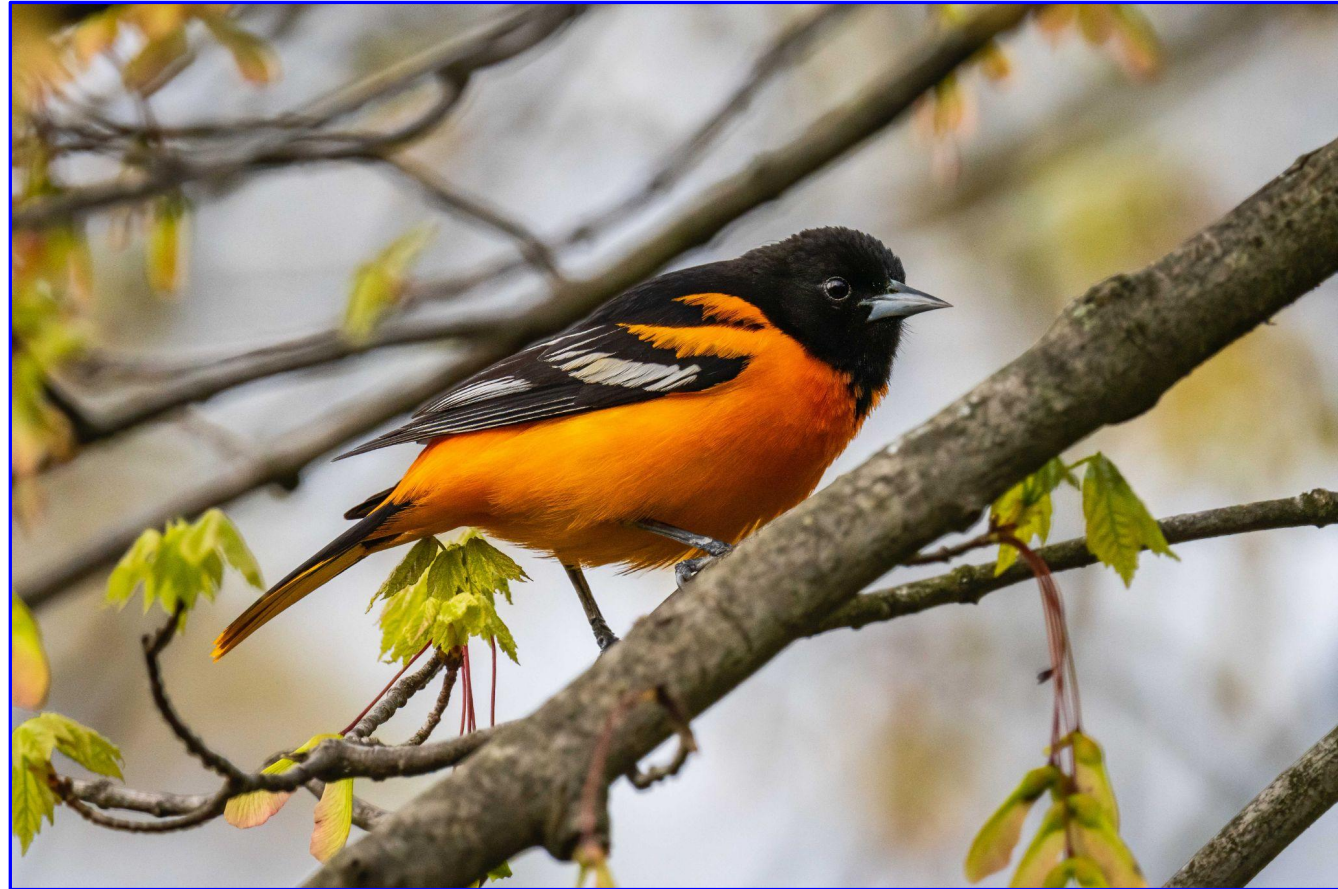
Pileated Woodpecker
(*Dryocopus pileatus*)

Year-round resident. Largest local woodpecker w/ flaming red crest; males have red "mustache"

Order: Passeriformes

- Very large group! Select families include:

- Family Mimidae
 - Mimic thrushes
- Family Parulidae
 - Wood-warblers
- Families Emberizidae & Passerellidae
 - Buntings & Sparrows
- Family Cardinalidae
 - Cardinals & allies
- Family Icteridae
 - Blackbirds, orioles, grackles



Male Baltimore Oriole

Mimidae

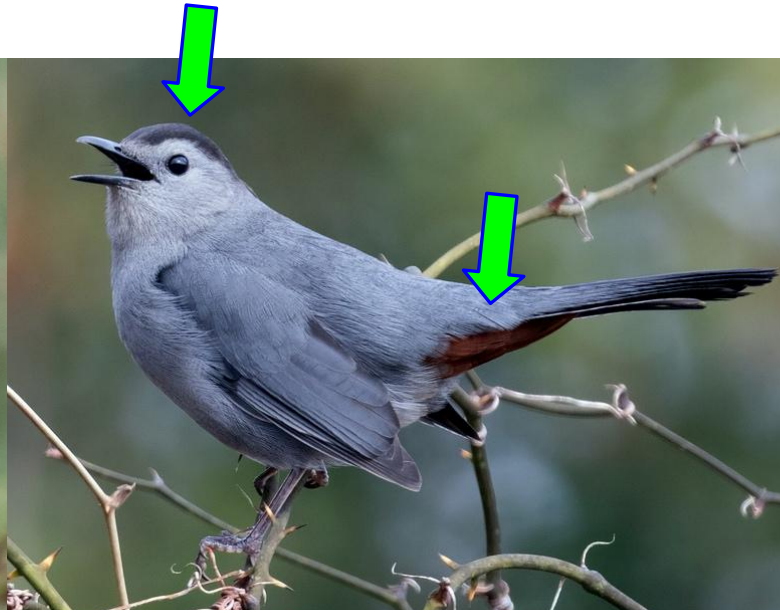


Brown Thrasher

(*Toxostoma rufum*)

Mostly **year-round resident**. Chestnut brown above w/ heavily streaked breast; has curved bill & long tail

Voice: similar to Gray Catbird but in pairs



Gray Catbird

(*Dumetella carolinensis*)

Mostly **year-round resident**. Gray bird w/ black cap & rusty patch undertail

Voice: catlike mewing



Northern Mockingbird

(*Mimus polyglottos*)

Year-round resident. Gray robin-sized bird w/ large white patches on wings and tail

Voice: varied mimics often repeated a half dozen times

Warblers



Northern Parula

(*Setophaga americana*)

Summer resident. Pale bluish above w/ yellow throat & breast; adult male has dark breast-band

Voice: zeeeeeeeeeee-up!



Yellow Warbler

(*Setophaga petechia*)

Summer resident. Mostly yellow; male has rusty breast streaks

Voice:
tsee-tsee-tsee-tsee-titi-weee



Prothonotary Warbler

(*Protonotaria citrea*)

Summer resident. Golden color; male breast & head are yellow w/ blue-gray wings

Voice: *zweet zweet zweet zweet*
zweet zweet

Winter Sparrows



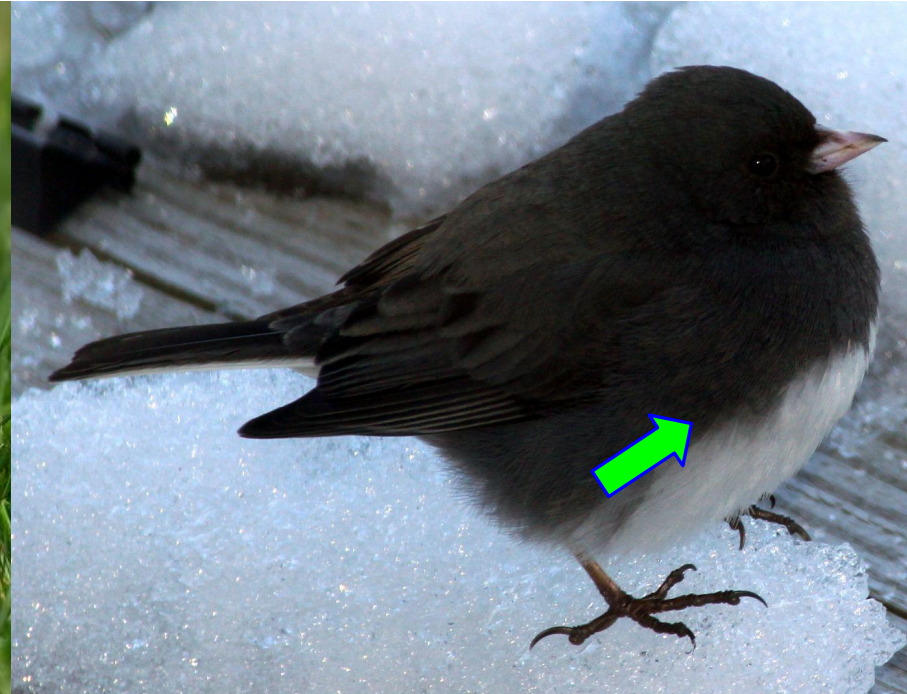
White-throated Sparrow
(*Zonotrichia albicollis*)

Winter resident. Adult has gray breast w/ white throat & yellow above lores; bill gray



White-Crowned Sparrow
(*Zonotrichia leucophrys*)

Winter resident. Adult has clear, grayish breast w/ black & white striped crown



Dark-eyed Junco
(*Junco hyemalis*)

Winter resident. Dark gray bird w/white belly & light bill; common feeder visitor

Cardinals & Allies



Northern Cardinal
(*Cardinalis cardinalis*)

Year-round resident. Male all red
w/ crest & black patch around
conical bill

Voice: clear, slurred whistles
repeated

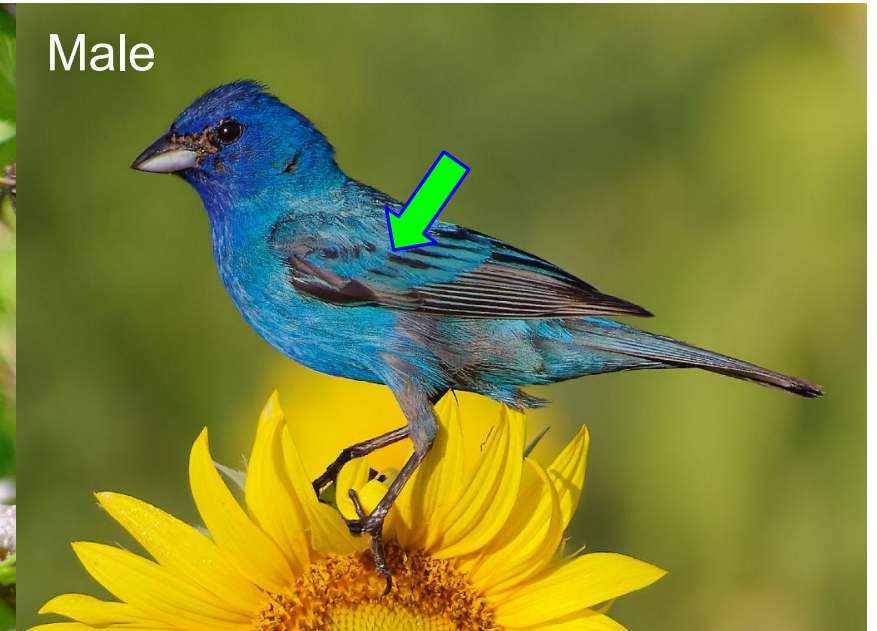


Blue Grosbeak

(*Passerina caerulea*)

Summer resident. Adult male
blue w/ rusty wing bars; female
brown w/ rusty wing bars

Voice: warbling song w/
phrases rising & falling



Indigo Bunting

(*Passerina cyanea*)

Summer resident. Breeding male
blue & small; female & immature
medium brown

Voice: lively song, usually paired
with *sweet-sweet*

Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918

- International treaty w/Canada, Japan, Mexico, Russia
- Protects all native species of birds, their nests, eggs, parts, etc.
- Prohibits the take (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transport) of protected migratory bird species
- Excludes non-native & invasive species
 - Ex: European Starlings, House Sparrows, etc



Birds like herons were once exploited due to their feathers. The Act prohibits taking feathers from protected bird species.

For Additional Information

For more information on Maryland's birds, please visit our webpage at: dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife
Additional information can be found in the following resources.

Book Resources:

- Peterson Field Guide to Birds of Eastern and Central North America, 7th Ed

Online Resources:

- [Maryland Envirothon \(Wildlife and Heritage Service\)](#)
- [Birds of Maryland \(MD DNR\)](#)
- [Maryland Biodiversity Project \(Birds\)](#)
- [The Cornell Lab of Ornithology: All About Birds](#)



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